

# Bulletin of the BRITISH ORNITHOLOGISTS' CLUB

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The seven hundred and forty-ninth Meeting of the Club was held in the Senior Common Room, South Side, Imperial College, London, S.W.7, on Tuesday, 20 September 1983 at 7 p.m. The attendance was 19 Members and 5 guests.

Members present were: B. GRAY (*Chairman*), P. J. BELMAN, K. F. BETTON, Mrs DIANA BRADLEY, D. R. CALDER, P. J. CONDER, R. A. N. CROUCHER, D. J. FISHER, A. GIBBS, D. GRIFFIN, R. H. KETTLE, J. KING, Revd. G. K. McCULLOCH, Dr. J. F. MONK, R. E. F. PEAL, GEORGE A. SMITH, Jr., S. A. H. STATHAM, J. PAUL STEVENS and N. H. F. STONE. Guests present were: D. BRADLEY, Mrs ISABEL McCULLOCH, K. McKENZIE, Dr. MARGARET SPITTLE, and Mrs. VALERIE STEVENS.

Mr. George A. Smith, Jr., gave a stimulating address on Convergence and Radiation in Parrots; a resume of it will be published in the *Bulletin*.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 1984 Annual General Meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club will be held in the Senior Common Room, South Side, Imperial College, Prince's Gardens, London, S.W.7 at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, 22 May 1984.

## AGENDA

1. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting (see *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 103:33).
2. Report of the Committee and Accounts for 1983.
3. The *Bulletin*.
4. Election of Officers.  
The Committee proposes that:—
  - (a) Mrs D. M. Bradley be re-elected Honorary Treasurer.
  - (b) Mr R. E. F. Peal be re-elected Honorary Secretary.
  - (c) Mr D. R. Calder be elected a member of the Committee *vice* Mr R. A. N. Croucher, who retires by rotation.
5. To consider and, if thought fit, to pass the following resolution, which will be proposed by the Committee as a special resolution in terms of Rule (14):—  
That Rule (1) be amended by the deletion in the first sentence of the words **one further term** and the substitution in place thereof of the words **additional terms**.  
(The relevant passage in Rule (1) would then read "an Editor of the Bulletin to be elected for five years, and who shall be eligible for re-election for additional terms".)
6. Any other business of which notice shall have been given in accordance with Rule (7) to the Hon. Secretary prior to 28 February 1984.

By Order of the Committee, RONALD E. F. PEAL  
*Honorary Secretary.*

## Brown-breasted Flycatcher *Muscicapa muttui* in Thailand by D. R. Wells

Received 25 January 1983

In Southeast Asia, south and west of the Chinese border, the Brown-breasted Flycatcher *Muscicapa muttui*, a montane forest species, has been recorded only at Black Rock, Ngawchang valley and in Bhamo district, northern Burma (BMNH; Harington 1909), in central Burma (Smythies 1953) and in the southern Shan States, eastern Burma, where Rippon (1901) found it "common" above 1500 m. Three adults from Doi Inthanon peak in the Thanon Thong Chai range (SE of Rippon's collecting area), recently identified in the collections of the Royal Thai Forestry Department and Thailand Institute for Scientific and Technological Research, Bangkok, carry it over the Shan frontier into NW Thailand and provide the first confirmed Thai occurrences (cf. Dickinson 1963, Wells 1977 postscript). They are a male (RTFD 1221) dated 1 April 1969 from Dong Tak-tin,

elevation 1400 m (i.e. within the evergreen forest altitudinal zone of Doi Inthanon) and 2 unsexed birds (TISTR 53-2953, 53-2954) dated 28 May 1970.

All populations of *M. muttui* in the known Sino-Himalayan range are likely to be to some extent migratory, but nowhere has this yet been shown directly, and the long-distance migrants of this species that winter in SW India and Sri Lanka (Ali & Ripley 1972) are from unknown breeding areas. Available Burmese (including South Shan) dates fall between 23 March and 13 April but are too few to be interpreted safely as evidence of spring passage status. For lack of information on *M. muttui* generally, therefore, its status in Thailand must also be treated as uncertain, even though 28 May is past the general peak of nesting by insectivorous passerines in the mountains of NW Thailand (Round 1982) and specimens have been collected in Szechuan, near the northern limit of the species' range, from half a month earlier (BMNH).

Nine specimens (BMNH, U.S. Natn. Mus.) from Manipur, Burma and west-central Szechuan ('stotzneri') are in close agreement with Thai material on plumage and soft-part coloration, wing, tail and tarsal measurements, the shortfall of full-grown primaries behind the tip of the closed wing, and the shape and size of the bill. They differ from 10 Assamese and Sikkim birds in being more olive and less rufous brown, especially on the upper tail-coverts and margins of the secondaries and secondary coverts. However, these differences could be season- or age-related as all of the Assamese and Sikkim specimens were collected in autumn. SW Indian and Sri Lankan winter migrants dated mid-October to mid-March (BMNH) span the full range of colour variation.

*Acknowledgements.* I would like to thank Dr. A. W. Diamond and Mr. B. E. Smythies for their help with literature not available in Malaysia and the latter for useful additional comments on the Burmese records of *muttui*.

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## Handedness in crossbills *Loxia* and the Akepa

### *Loxops coccinea*

by Alan G. Knox

Received 6 January 1983

Although the 4 species of crossbills *Loxia* are typical Cardueline finches in many aspects of their biology, they have become uniquely specialised to feed efficiently on the seeds of coniferous trees. Many other birds in the northern